

A
↓

DCI Turner's Address on May 10, 1980

Family Visitation Day

1130 & 1300 hrs. Speech's

B
↓

Address by Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
Family Visitation Day
10 May 1980

Good morning everybody. I'm Stan Turner, Director of Central Intelligence. Welcome. We are pleased to have so many of you with us here today to see our Headquarters and to visit on our campus out here.

I think the Central Intelligence Agency asks and receives more from the families of its employees than any agency of the United States Government. Hence, we are very pleased to have so many of you with us here today to get a little additional insight into what we do and what you are supporting so thoroughly and so well. We ask you to support the member of your family who works here when he or she can tell you probably less about what he or she does than almost any other employee of the government. We ask your help when we require so often late hours, extra effort, sudden moves, unexpected activities so that this Agency can respond instantly and surely to the needs of the policy-makers of our Government and we are grateful to you for that continuing support that you do provide.

If you have been here before, you will find that the campus doesn't look much different. It is a beautiful day, a beautiful location, but the outward lack of change perhaps hides the fact that there is great change going on inside our Agency, inside the Intelligence Community of our country today. You have seen a lot of in these pictures. There is change in this technical capability to collect information. The change is such that today we have just a plethora of data coming in from these advanced technical signals and photographic systems. A lot of that is due to the ingenuity and the innovativeness of the members of the Central Intelligence Agency who work, develop and utilize

these technical systems. It really is truly remarkable what people in this Agency have been able to do with the electrons, with the computers, with the photographic systems in terms of getting more information all around the world. In addition, you have heard us talk in these figures about the photographic systems that have done so much for our country in the Cuban Missile Crisis and elsewhere, and those are truly astounding in their performance--much of it comes from the originality of the research and development done right here in the building that you are going to visit shortly.

The human intelligence side, which we have also stressed in the slide show, doesn't change as rapidly as the technical side perhaps, but I can say to you with great sincerity that I believe the professionalism--the ability to operate under very, very difficult circumstances in foreign countries of our human intelligence people today--is absolutely outstanding. It is the best in the world.

And when we get all the human and we get all the technical intelligence here into this building, it takes great innovativeness, great resourcefulness for the analyst to turn that into something useful. And again, I am continually impressed, continually amazed, at how those analysts can take a little clue here, a little clue there, add it together and turn it into something that really can be meaningful. It is a difficult task because so much often weighs on what they come up with. Do they add those two clues together properly and

draw useful conclusions or are they misled? Every time we do this we have to be very conscientious because of the great value that may be put on what we say. I think a major change in that sense today is much greater importance of what we do. Years ago when we were by far the strongest economic, political and military power in the world, it was important to have good intelligence. Today, when we have much more competition, when there is much more equality all around the world and not just in the Soviet Union, but many other countries, having good intelligence, knowing what is going on is much more a critical part of the foreign policy of our country. We have to be more insightful, we have to be more understanding, we have to be more clever if we are going to compete and lead in these circumstances than perhaps a decade or two ago.

And I can say to you that you can and you should take great pride in what the members of your family are doing here today, because this country and its leadership recognizes the quality and the importance of what this Agency is doing. And I believe that is another important change. It has always been recognized as important, but today the range, just in the few years even that I have had the privilege of being here, we have much more receptivity; many more committees of the Congress asking for, listening to or reading our products today. We have a very important role in the deliberations in the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department and being the one agency in the government in the intelligence business that is not associated with any policy formulations, therefore, we are looked upon as the neutral people who try best to put out what we believe is objectively true and not what supports this program or that policy, this budget or whatever it may be. We have tremendous respect in the

Executive Branch for that.

One of the major changes that you are well aware of in the world of intelligence today, is that we also are much more associated with the public. We are much more in the newspapers today. We are printing more of our studies in unclassified form and sharing with the American public. There are pluses and there are clearly minuses at being more involved and more public because secrecy is our stock in trade. And yet, we are such a large and important part of the American Government that there is no way we can retreat into a shell of total secrecy. The media, for about five years now, has been intensely interested in what we are doing--sometimes very critical. But I think one of the most encouraging signs we see around us is the change in that tone--the change in understanding of how important it is we are doing what we do for the safety and security of this country. And that understanding is something that we all can take pride in because what we have been doing all along, even in the periods of greatest criticism, has been of intense importance to this country and has retained that same quality of product that we have always had. Now, we see much more understanding and receptivity of that.

You can be proud what this Agency is doing, what its influence on the government of this country is and how critical it is to that government. And we are proud and grateful to you for what you do in supporting us. I hope now that you will enjoy your tour around the building and thank you again both for being here and for your continuing support.